

**Amend Section 214 of the Property Taxes Law to add limited liability companies to the list of qualifying entities for the welfare exemption.**

**Source: Chief Counsel's Matters October 5, 2003**

The welfare exemption is created by Article XIII, Section 4, which authorizes the Legislature to exempt property used exclusively for religious, hospital, or charitable purposes and owned or held in trust by corporations or other entities. In implementing this provision, the Legislature has specified in Revenue and Taxation Code Section 214 that the "other entities" include "community chests, funds (or) foundations."

Many nonprofit organizations have approached the Board of Equalization (Board) investigating the possibility of reforming as an LLC. However under current law and regulations, ownership by a limited liability company (LLC) is not expressly provided. Board staff has responded to those inquiring that existing property tax law and regulations would not permit the welfare exemption to be extended to property owned by an LLC and that a modification of existing laws and/or regulations would be necessary to expressly provide for LLCs.

In May 2003, a petition was filed with the Board to adopt a new regulation (Rule 136) that would extend the welfare exemption to a LLC organized and operated for exempt purposes. In response, the Board began a series of interested parties meetings and developed a regulation and legislative proposal that would allow LLCs to qualify for the welfare exemption. A group of interested parties worked in July and August of 2003 to reach consensus on the proposed legislation and regulation and the Board authorized publication of the proposed regulation in October 2003.

The purpose of the legislation and the companion regulation is to provide nonprofit organizations that currently qualify for the welfare exemption the option of forming LLCs for purposes of owning and operating their properties. The regulation's provisions define a qualifying LLC for purposes of Section 214, and enumerate organizational and operational requirements. These requirements are intended to ensure that qualifying LLCs adhere to the same requirements as other nonprofit [tax-exempt] entities currently eligible for the exemption. The corresponding statutory changes would add the LLC as a qualifying entity in Section 214 et seq., thereby allowing the LLC and its property to qualify for the exemption only if all the existing requirements for the welfare exemption are satisfied.

Under the regulation, the LLC must be wholly owned by qualifying nonprofit tax-exempt organizations that are eligible for the welfare exemption, so an expansion of the welfare exemption should not result. (See Rule 136, subsection (b)) In addition, both the LLC and its property must satisfy the same legal requirements as other legal entities eligible for the welfare exemption. (See Draft Rule 136 requirements and suggested legislation)

Section 214 implements Section 4(b) of Article XIII of the California Constitution, which provides that the Legislature may exempt, "property used exclusively for religious, hospital or charitable purposes and owned or held in trust by corporations or other entities" that meet certain requirements. The original language in the Constitution identified the nonprofit organizations as "community chests, funds, foundations or corporations," recognizing the types of nonprofit entities in existence at that time. These entities also have been specified in Section 214 since its enactment in 1945. Subsequent amendment to the Constitution however, replaced this language with more general language, "corporations or other entities." The intent of the Constitutional amendment, in 1945 was to allow exemption from property taxes to all nonprofit organizations providing services to the community and meeting the specified requirements. Thus, amending Section 214 to expressly include LLCs would update the statutory provision and achieve consistency with voter intent in approving the original Constitutional Amendment.

The adoption of regulations and the related statutory changes should not cause an expansion of the exemption, but instead generate a change in the type of legal entity qualifying for exemption. Thus, nonprofit organizations already receiving the welfare exemption for their real property would transfer these assets to a qualifying LLC, as specified in proposed Rule 136.

*Section 214 of the Revenue and Taxation Code is amended to read:*

214. (a) Property used exclusively for religious, hospital, scientific, or charitable purposes owned and operated by community chests, funds, foundations, limited liability companies, or corporations organized and operated for religious, hospital, scientific, or charitable purposes is exempt from taxation, including ad valorem taxes to pay the interest and redemption charges on any indebtedness approved by the voters prior to July 1, 1978, or any bonded indebtedness for the acquisition or improvement of real property approved on or after July 1, 1978, by two-thirds of the votes cast by the voters voting on the proposition, if:

(1) The owner is not organized or operated for profit. However, in the case of hospitals, the organization shall not be deemed to be organized or operated for profit if, during the immediately preceding fiscal year, operating revenues, exclusive of gifts, endowments and grants-in-aid, did not exceed operating expenses by an amount equivalent to 10 percent of those operating expenses. As used herein, operating expenses include depreciation based on cost of replacement and amortization of, and interest on, indebtedness.

(2) No part of the net earnings of the owner inures to the benefit of any private shareholder or individual.

(3) The property is used for the actual operation of the exempt activity, and does not exceed an amount of property reasonably necessary to the accomplishment of the exempt purpose.

(A) For the purposes of determining whether the property is used for the actual operation of the exempt activity, consideration shall not be given to use of the

property for either or both of the following described activities if that use is occasional:

(i) The owner conducts fundraising activities on the property and the proceeds derived from those activities are not unrelated business taxable income, as defined in Section 512 of the Internal Revenue Code, of the owner and are used to further the exempt activity of the owner.

(ii) The owner permits any other organization that meets all of the requirements of this subdivision, other than ownership of the property, to conduct fundraising activities on the property and the proceeds derived from those activities are not unrelated business taxable income, as defined in Section 512 of the Internal Revenue Code, of the organization, are not subject to the tax on unrelated business taxable income that is imposed by Section 511 of the Internal Revenue Code, and are used to further the exempt activity of the organization.

(B) For purposes of subparagraph (A):

(i) "Occasional use" means use of the property on an irregular or intermittent basis by the qualifying owner or any other qualifying organization described in clause (ii) of subparagraph (A) that is incidental to the primary activities of the owner or the other organization.

(ii) "Fundraising activities" means both activities involving the direct solicitation of money or other property and the anticipated exchange of goods or services for money between the soliciting organization and the organization or person solicited.

(C) Subparagraph (A) shall have no application in determining whether paragraph (3) has been satisfied unless the owner of the property and any other organization using the property as provided in subparagraph (A) have filed with the assessor a valid organizational clearance certificate issued pursuant to Section 254.6.

(D) For the purposes of determining whether the property is used for the actual operation of the exempt activity, consideration shall not be given to the use of the property for meetings conducted by any other organization if the meetings are incidental to the other organization's primary activities, are not fundraising meetings or activities as defined in subparagraph (B), are held no more than once per week, and the other organization and its use of the property meet all other requirements of paragraphs (1) to (5), inclusive. The owner of the other organization also shall file with the assessor a valid organizational clearance certificate issued pursuant to Section 254.6.

(E) Nothing in subparagraph (A), (B), (C), or (D) shall be construed to either enlarge or restrict the exemption provided for in subdivision (b) of Section 4 and Section 5 of Article XIII of the California Constitution and this section.

(4) The property is not used or operated by the owner or by any other person so as to benefit any officer, trustee, director, shareholder, member, employee, contributor, or bondholder of the owner or operator, or any other person, through the distribution of profits, payment of excessive charges or compensations, or the more advantageous pursuit of their business or profession.

(5) The property is not used by the owner or members thereof for fraternal or lodge purposes, or for social club purposes except where that use is clearly incidental to a primary religious, hospital, scientific, or charitable purpose.

(6) The property is irrevocably dedicated to religious, charitable, scientific, or hospital purposes and upon the liquidation, dissolution, or abandonment of the owner will not inure to the benefit of any private person except a fund, foundation, or corporation organized and operated for religious, hospital, scientific, or charitable purposes.

(7) The property, if used exclusively for scientific purposes, is used by a foundation or institution that, in addition to complying with the foregoing requirements for the exemption of charitable organizations in general, has been chartered by the Congress of the United States (except that this requirement shall not apply when the scientific purposes are medical research), and whose objects are the encouragement or conduct of scientific investigation, research, and discovery for the benefit of the community at large.

The exemption provided for herein shall be known as the "welfare exemption." This exemption shall be in addition to any other exemption now provided by law, and the existence of the exemption provision in paragraph (2) of subdivision (a) of Section 202 shall not preclude the exemption under this section for museum or library property. Except as provided in subdivision (e), this section shall not be construed to enlarge the college exemption.

(b) Property used exclusively for school purposes of less than collegiate grade and owned and operated by religious, hospital, or charitable funds, foundations, limited liability companies, or corporations, which property and funds, foundations, limited liability companies, or corporations meet all of the requirements of subdivision (a), shall be deemed to be within the exemption provided for in subdivision (b) of Section 4 and Section 5 of Article XIII of the California Constitution and this section.

(c) Property used exclusively for nursery school purposes and owned and operated by religious, hospital, or charitable funds, foundations, limited liability companies, or corporations, which property and funds, foundations, limited liability companies, or corporations meet all the requirements of subdivision (a), shall be deemed to be within the exemption provided for in subdivision (b) of Section 4 and Section 5 of Article XIII of the California Constitution and this section.

(d) Property used exclusively for a noncommercial educational FM broadcast station or an educational television station, and owned and operated by religious, hospital, scientific, or charitable funds, foundations, limited liability companies, or corporations meeting all of the requirements of subdivision (a), shall be deemed to be within the exemption provided for in subdivision (b) of Section 4 and Section 5 of Article XIII of the California Constitution and this section.

(e) Property used exclusively for religious, charitable, scientific, or hospital purposes and owned and operated by religious, hospital, scientific, or charitable funds, foundations, limited liability companies, or corporations or educational institutions of collegiate grade, as defined in Section 203, which property and funds, foundations, limited liability companies, corporations, or educational institutions meet all of the requirements of subdivision (a), shall be deemed to be within the exemption provided for in subdivision (b) of Section 4 and Section 5 of Article XIII of the California Constitution and this section. As to educational institutions of

collegiate grade, as defined in Section 203, the requirements of paragraph (6) of subdivision (a) shall be deemed to be met if both of the following are met:

(1) The property of the educational institution is irrevocably dedicated in its articles of incorporation to charitable and educational purposes, to religious and educational purposes, or to educational purposes.

(2) The articles of incorporation of the educational institution provide for distribution of its property upon its liquidation, dissolution, or abandonment to a fund, foundation, or corporation organized and operated for religious, hospital, scientific, charitable, or educational purposes meeting the requirements for exemption provided by Section 203 or this section. (f) Property used exclusively for housing and related facilities for elderly or handicapped families and financed by, including, but not limited to, the federal government pursuant to Section 202 of Public Law 86-372 (12 U.S.C. Sec. 1701q), as amended, Section 231 of Public Law 73-479 (12 U.S.C. Sec. 1715v), Section 236 of Public Law 90-448 (12 U.S.C. Sec. 1715z), or Section 811 of Public Law 101-625 (42 U.S.C. Sec. 8013), and owned and operated by religious, hospital, scientific, or charitable funds, foundations, or corporations meeting all of the requirements of this section shall be deemed to be within the exemption provided for in subdivision (b) of Section 4 and Section 5 of Article XIII of the California Constitution and this section.

The amendment of this paragraph made by Chapter 1102 of the Statutes of 1984 does not constitute a change in, but is declaratory of, the existing law. However, no refund of property taxes shall be required as a result of this amendment for any fiscal year prior to the fiscal year in which the amendment takes effect.

Property used exclusively for housing and related facilities for elderly or handicapped families at which supplemental care or services designed to meet the special needs of elderly or handicapped residents are not provided, or that is not financed by the federal government pursuant to Section 202 of Public Law 86-372 (12 U.S.C. Sec. 1701q), as amended, Section 231 of Public Law 73-479 (12 U.S.C. Sec. 1715v), Section 236 of Public Law 90-448 (12 U.S.C. Sec. 1715z), or Section 811 of Public Law 101-625 (42 U.S.C. Sec. 8013), shall not be entitled to exemption pursuant to this subdivision unless the property is used for housing and related facilities for low- and moderate-income elderly or handicapped families. Property that would otherwise be exempt pursuant to this subdivision, except that it includes some housing and related facilities for other than low- or moderate-income elderly or handicapped families, shall be entitled to a partial exemption. The partial exemption shall be equal to that percentage of the value of the property that is equal to the percentage that the number of low- and moderate-income elderly and handicapped families occupying the property represents of the total number of families occupying the property.

As used in this subdivision, "low and moderate income" has the same meaning as the term "persons and families of low or moderate income" as defined by Section 50093 of the Health and Safety Code.

(g) (1) Property used exclusively for rental housing and related facilities and owned and operated by religious, hospital, scientific, or charitable funds, foundations, limited liability companies, or corporations, including limited partnerships in which

the managing general partner or eligible limited liability company, is an eligible nonprofit corporation, meeting all of the requirements of this section, or by veterans' organizations, as described in Section 215.1, meeting all the requirements of paragraphs (1) to (7), inclusive, of subdivision (a), shall be deemed to be within the exemption provided for in subdivision (b) of Section 4 and Section 5 of Article XIII of the California Constitution and this section and shall be entitled to a partial exemption equal to that percentage of the value of the property that the portion of the property serving lower income households represents of the total property in any year in which either of the following criteria applies:

(A) The acquisition, rehabilitation, development, or operation of the property, or any combination of these factors, is financed with tax-exempt mortgage revenue bonds or general obligation bonds, or is financed by local, state, or federal loans or grants and the rents of the occupants who are lower income households do not exceed those prescribed by deed restrictions or regulatory agreements pursuant to the terms of the financing or financial assistance.

(B) The owner of the property is eligible for and receives low-income housing tax credits pursuant to Section 42 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as added by Public Law 99-514.

(C) In the case of a claim, other than a claim with respect to property owned by a limited partnership in which the managing general partner is an eligible nonprofit corporation, that is filed for the 2000–01 fiscal year or any fiscal year thereafter, 90 percent or more of the occupants of the property are lower income households whose rent does not exceed the rent prescribed by Section 50053 of the Health and Safety Code. The total exemption amount allowed under this subdivision to a taxpayer, with respect to a single property or multiple properties for any fiscal year on the sole basis of the application of this subparagraph, may not exceed twenty thousand dollars (\$20,000) of tax.

(2) In order to be eligible for the exemption provided by this subdivision, the owner of the property shall do both of the following:

(A) (i) For any claim filed for the 2000–01 fiscal year or any fiscal year thereafter, certify and ensure, subject to the limitation in clause (ii), that there is an enforceable and verifiable agreement with a public agency, a recorded deed restriction, or other legal document that restricts the project's usage and that provides that the units designated for use by lower income households are continuously available to or occupied by lower income households at rents that do not exceed those prescribed by Section 50053 of the Health and Safety Code, or, to the extent that the terms of federal, state, or local financing or financial assistance conflicts with Section 50053, rents that do not exceed those prescribed by the terms of the financing or financial assistance.

(ii) In the case of a limited partnership in which the managing general partner is an eligible nonprofit corporation, the restriction and provision specified in clause (i) shall be contained in an enforceable and verifiable agreement with a public agency, or in a recorded deed restriction to which the limited partnership certifies.

(B) Certify that the funds that would have been necessary to pay property taxes are used to maintain the affordability of, or reduce rents otherwise necessary for, the units occupied by lower income households.

(3) As used in this subdivision, "lower income households" has the same meaning as the term "lower income households" as defined by Section 50079.5 of the Health and Safety Code.

(h) Property used exclusively for an emergency or temporary shelter and related facilities for homeless persons and families and owned and operated by religious, hospital, scientific, or charitable funds, foundations, limited liability companies, or corporations meeting all of the requirements of this section shall be deemed to be within the exemption provided for in subdivision (b) of Section 4 and Section 5 of Article XIII of the California Constitution and this section. Property that otherwise would be exempt pursuant to this subdivision, except that it includes housing and related facilities for other than an emergency or temporary shelter, shall be entitled to a partial exemption.

As used in this subdivision, "emergency or temporary shelter" means a facility that would be eligible for funding pursuant to Chapter 11 (commencing with Section 50800) of Part 2 of Division 31 of the Health and Safety Code.

(i) Property used exclusively for housing and related facilities for employees of religious, charitable, scientific, or hospital organizations that meet all the requirements of subdivision (a) and owned and operated by funds, foundations, or corporations that meet all the requirements of subdivision (a) shall be deemed to be within the exemption provided for in subdivision (b) of Sections 4 and 5 of Article XIII of the California Constitution and this section to the extent the residential use of the property is institutionally necessary for the operation of the organization.

(j) For purposes of this section, charitable purposes include educational purposes. For purposes of this subdivision, "educational purposes" means those educational purposes and activities for the benefit of the community as a whole or an unascertainable and indefinite portion thereof, and shall not include those educational purposes and activities that are primarily for the benefit of an organization's shareholders. Educational activities include the study of relevant information, the dissemination of that information to interested members of the general public, and the participation of interested members of the general public.

(k) In the case of property used exclusively for the exempt purposes specified in this section, owned and operated by a limited liability company, organized and operated for those purposes, the Board of Equalization shall adopt regulations to specify the ownership, organizational, and operational requirements for such entities to qualify for the exemption provided by this section.

*Section 214.01 of the Revenue and Taxation Code is amended to read:*

214.01. (a) For the purpose of Section 214, property shall be deemed irrevocably dedicated to religious, charitable, scientific, or hospital purposes only if a statement of irrevocable dedication to only these purposes is found in the articles of

incorporation of the corporation, or in the case of any other fund or foundation, limited liability company, or corporation chartered by an act of Congress, in the bylaws, articles of association, articles of organization, constitution, or regulations thereof, as determined by the State Board of Equalization.

(b) If, when performing the duties specified by Section 254.6, the board finds that an applicant for the welfare exemption is ineligible for an organizational clearance certificate, because at the time of the filing of the claim required by Section 254.6, the applicant's articles of incorporation, or in the case of any noncorporate fund or foundation, its bylaws, articles of association, articles of organization, constitution or regulations, did not comply with the provisions of this section, the board shall notify the applicant in writing. The applicant shall have until the next succeeding lien date to amend its articles of incorporation, or in the case of any noncorporate fund or foundation, its bylaws, articles of association, articles of organization, constitution or regulations, and to file a certified copy of these amendments that conform to the provisions of this section with the board, and the board shall make a finding that the applicant, if otherwise qualified, is eligible for an organizational clearance certificate and forward that finding to the assessor.

*Section 214.02 of the Revenue and Taxation Code is amended to read:*

214.02 (a) Except as provided in subdivision (b) or (c), property that is used exclusively for the preservation of native plants or animals, biotic communities, geological or geographical formations of scientific or educational interest, or open-space lands used solely for recreation and for the enjoyment of scenic beauty, is open to the general public subject to reasonable restrictions concerning the needs of the land, and is owned and operated by a scientific or charitable fund, foundation, limited liability company or corporation, the primary interest of which is to preserve those natural areas, and that meets all the requirements of Section 214, shall be deemed to be within the exemption provided for in subdivision (b) of Sections 4 and 5 of Article XIII of the Constitution of the State of California and Section 214.

(b) The exemption provided by this section shall not apply to any property of an organization that owns in the aggregate 30,000 acres or more in one county that were exempt under this section prior to March 1, 1983, or that are proposed to be exempt, unless the nonprofit organization that holds the property is constituted in such a way as to be fully independent of the owner of any taxable real property that is adjacent to the property otherwise qualifying for tax exemption under this section. For purposes of this section, the nonprofit organization that holds the property shall be considered fully independent if the exempt property is not used or operated by that organization or by any other person so as to benefit any officer, trustee, director, shareholder, member, employee, contributor or bondholder of the exempt organization or operator, or the owner of any adjacent property, or any other person, through the distribution of profits, payment of excessive charges or compensations, or the more advantageous pursuit of their business or profession.



(c) The exemption provided by this section shall not apply to property that is reserved for future development.

(d) This section shall be operative from the lien date in 1983 to and including the lien date in 2012, after which date this section shall become inoperative, and as of January 1, 2013, this section is repealed.

*Section 214.5 of the Revenue and Taxation Code is amended to read:*

Section 214.5. Property used exclusively for school purposes of less than collegiate grade, or exclusively for purposes of both schools of and less than collegiate grade, and owned and operated by religious, hospital or charitable funds, foundations, limited liability companies or corporations, which property and funds, foundations, limited liability companies or corporations meet all of the requirements of Section 214, shall be deemed to be within the exemption provided for in subdivision (b) of Section 4 and Section 5 of Article XIII of the Constitution of the State of California and Section 214. This section shall not be construed to enlarge the college exemption.

*Section 214.14 of the Revenue and Taxation Code is amended to read:*

Section 214.14. Property used exclusively for the charitable purposes of museums and owned and operated by a religious, hospital, scientific, or charitable fund, foundation, limited liability company or corporation which meets all the requirements of subdivision (a) of Section 214 shall be deemed to be within the exemption provided by Sections 4 and 5 of Article XIII of the California Constitution and Section 214. For purposes of this section:

(a) Property used exclusively for the charitable purposes of museums shall include property used for activities and facilities related to the primary charitable purposes of museums and reasonably necessary and incidental to those purposes.

(b) Property used exclusively for the charitable purposes of museums shall not be required to be indispensable to the primary charitable purposes of museums.

(c) Property used exclusively for the charitable purposes of museums shall not include property used for activities and facilities not related to the primary charitable purposes of museums and not reasonably necessary or incidental to those purposes.

(d) Property used exclusively for the charitable purposes of museums shall include property owned by a nonprofit association or organization performing auxiliary services to any city or county museum in the state and used for the storage of items donated for an annual rummage sale, the proceeds of which, after taking into account the expenses of the nonprofit association or organization, are used to provide support to those museums. For purposes of this subdivision, "storage of items donated for an annual rummage sale" shall not be considered a "fundraising activity," as that term is used in paragraph (3) of subdivision (a) of Section 214.

*Section 214.8 of the Revenue and Taxation Code is amended to read:*

Section 214.8. (a) Except as provided in Sections 213.7 and 231, and as provided in subdivision (g) of Section 214 with respect to veterans' organizations, the "welfare exemption" shall not be granted to any organization unless it is qualified as an exempt organization under either Section 23701d of this code or Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. This section shall not be construed to enlarge the "welfare exemption" to apply to organizations qualified under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954 but not otherwise qualified for the "welfare exemption" under other provisions of this code.

The exemption for veterans' organizations shall not be granted to any organization unless it is qualified as an exempt organization under either Section 23701f or 23701w of this code or under Section 501(c)(4) or 501(c)(19) of the Internal Revenue Code. This section shall not be construed to enlarge the "veterans' organization exemption" to apply to organizations qualified under Section 501(c)(4) or 501(c)(19) of the Internal Revenue Code but not otherwise qualified for the "veterans' organization exemption" under other provisions of this code.

(b) For purposes of subdivision (a), an organization shall not be deemed to be qualified as an exempt organization unless the organization files with the assessor a valid organizational clearance certificate issued pursuant to Section 254.6.

(c) For purposes of subdivision (a), a limited liability company wholly owned by one or more qualifying organization(s) exempt under section 23701d of the Revenue Taxation Code or under section 501[c][3] of the Internal Revenue Code, shall qualify as an exempt organization. In the case of a limited liability company that does not have a valid unrevoked letter from the Franchise Tax Board or Internal Revenue Service, the limited liability company shall not be deemed to be qualified as an exempt organization unless each member of the limited liability company files with the board a copy of a valid, unrevoked letter or ruling from either the Franchise Tax Board or the Internal Revenue Service, which states that the organization qualifies as an exempt organization under the appropriate provisions of the Corporation Tax Law or the Internal Revenue Code.